



**New Brunswick  
College of Pharmacists**  
**Ordre des pharmaciens  
du Nouveau-Brunswick**

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<b>POLICY NAME:</b>	<b>POSITION STATEMENT: Naloxone</b>
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## Position Statement: Naloxone

### PURPOSE

1. To facilitate, through education, pharmacy professionals' (Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians) role in effective and safe provision of naloxone to clients (and their first responders) with an actual and/or potential indication for its use.
2. To highlight actual and potential economic, social and educational barriers that may exist preventing naloxone's availability in opioid overdose situations (i.e. severe respiratory depression or respiratory crisis).

### PHILOSOPHY

The provision of naloxone should be considered a necessary and appropriate part of the care plan for individuals experiencing/at risk of opioid overdose. This therapeutic option should be made available without regard to origin of the opioid (pursuant to prescription or via illicit means).

Any risk of medication side effects (e.g.. immediate withdrawal, injection site infection, etc.) are outweighed by the benefit of prolonging life. Naloxone availability has not been shown to increase risk taking behaviour, cannot be abused and causes no effect in absence of opioids.

Barriers to appropriate availability in New Brunswick include:

- Individuals with addiction experience stigma in society and healthcare which potentially increases risk of not receiving life-saving treatment
- Lack of education within community regarding the availability of naloxone
- Rural population may experience delay in first responder administration of naloxone
- Practitioner failure to integrate the agent into individual client care plans
- Naloxone acquisition cost

Naloxone plays a small but important role in the general strategy to address the major health crisis of opioid addiction. Pharmacy professionals in conjunction with other healthcare providers must act to ensure opioids are prescribed rationally according to established evidence so that life-threatening respiratory (and other major) sequelae are avoided.

## BACKGROUND

Naloxone reverses the respiratory depression associated with opioid overdose.<sup>1</sup> It can be administered to clients in all populations (including pediatric and geriatric) experiencing respiratory depression secondary to opioid overdose.

Naloxone has been available as a prescription drug in Canada for more than 40 years, used mainly in the hospital setting. It has not been commonly prescribed to clients in the community and has not been broadly dispensed in community pharmacies. In mid-2016, the National Drug Scheduling Advisory Committee (NDSAC) granted naloxone Schedule II (available without a prescription) status on the [National Drug Schedules \(NDS\)](#). At the end of December 2016 the nasal spray formulation of naloxone also gained Schedule II status.

## PHARMACY TEAM'S ROLE

Pharmacists are obliged to assess clients in order to identify whether clients (and potentially close contacts with access to these pharmaceuticals) have an indication (e.g. at risk of severe, life-threatening respiratory depression secondary to opioid overdose) that requires the use of an opioid antagonist (e.g. naloxone). In consultation with the client the pharmacist provides an appropriate intervention strategy. Pharmacist involvement is required for provision of all [Schedule II](#) drugs including naloxone. Providing proper instruction to the client or client's agent on how to ascertain whether naloxone is required, administration of naloxone and follow-up care is **critical** to the effective use of this drug. Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians are encouraged to advocate for their clients in procurement of naloxone and work to surmount any barriers to access (including but not limited to economic, awareness, social, cultural and geographical).

## PRODUCT PREPARATION

Regardless of administration route selected (intranasal or injection), pharmacy should provide a complete kit that contains written instructions (reinforcing in-person teaching) for administration and disposal, equipment (syringes, swabs, nasal atomiser etc.), along with the medication. Generally, multiple doses are provided in the event the initial dose effect wanes prior to the individual receiving emergent medical care.

## CONCLUSION

The College recommends pharmacists undertake continuing education on the use of naloxone via documents published by other professional organisations such as those resources provided in the appendix to this document. Please be aware, some of the information may be province-specific and not necessarily indicative of what may be occurring in New Brunswick. The College anticipates working with stakeholders to continue to address barriers to access.

For further information or to provide feedback on this document, please contact the College directly ([info@nbpharmacists.ca](mailto:info@nbpharmacists.ca) or call 506.857.8957).

REVIEW FREQUENCY:  
RESPONSIBILITY:

## APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### PHARMACIST TRAINING

Ontario College of Pharmacists (OCP)  
[Guidance for Pharmacy Professionals who are Dispensing or Selling Naloxone](#)

College of Pharmacists of British Columbia (CPBC)<sup>1</sup>  
[Naloxone Training \(PowerPoint\)](#)  
[Checklist for Naloxone Training](#)

Canadian Pharmacists' Association  
Naloxone resources are available on the Canadian Pharmacists' Association's Opioid Crisis page on their website.  
<https://www.pharmacists.ca/advocacy/advocacy-activities/opioid-crisis/>

**Ontario HIV Treatment Network (Resuscitation Evidence)**  
[http://www.ohtn.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/RR108\\_Opioid-Overdose.pdf](http://www.ohtn.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/RR108_Opioid-Overdose.pdf)

### DISPENSING AND COUNSELLING INFORMATION

Ontario College of Pharmacists (OCP)  
[Dispensing or Selling Naloxone](#)

College of Pharmacists of Manitoba  
[Guidelines for Pharmacists Selling Naloxone as a Schedule II Drug](#)

NAPRA  
[Supplemental Standards of Practice for Schedule II and Schedule III Drugs](#)  
Note: In Canada, Naloxone is also available in other strengths and volumes, please see Health Canada's Drug Product Database at: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/prodpharma/databasdon/index-eng.php> for further information.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

British Columbia College of Pharmacists (BCCP)<sup>1</sup>  
[Frequently Asked Questions](#)  
[Additional information](#)

Health Canada  
[Interim Order Respecting Naloxone Hydrochloride Nasal Spray](#)  
[Notice - Availability of Naloxone Hydrochloride Nasal Spray \(NARCAN®\) in Canada](#)  
[Important Supplementary Information for NARCAN® Nasal Spray 4mg](#)

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse  
A bulletin on Naloxone has been prepared by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse for the Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (CCENDU) [CCENDU Bulletin](#)

Sandoz Canada  
[Naloxone Consumer Information Leaflet](#)

BioMed Central  
[Opioid overdose prevention and naloxone rescue kits: what we know and what we don't know](#)

<sup>1</sup>Naloxone educational information included here was developed through a partnership between the College of Pharmacists of BC, the BC Centre of Disease Control and the Province of BC's Ministry of Health.